

brutality of war, many have sacrificed their lives, bringing devastating pain and grief to their families and friends. No one feels such a loss more acutely than do the mothers and fathers of these patriots who have paid so dearly to serve our country. To bear and nurture children, to give them life and unbounded love, to raise them with care to adulthood, only to lose them to the fatal grip of war, brings an abiding sorrow.

Yet, with strength and determination, a group of extraordinary women has transformed sorrow into service to others. Since 1928, America's Gold Star Mothers have worked together to serve their communities and our Nation. They bring comfort and hope to disabled veterans and their families, to keep alive the memory of all Americans who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom, and to promote harmony among all the peoples of the world. Their quest for peace is especially poignant because they know better than most the cruel costs of war. Every Gold Star Mother has faced the inevitable and unyielding truth that the proud son or daughter who marched off to battle will never come home to her loving arms. Bound by sorrow yet filled with compassion, America's Gold Star Mothers are a noble example of love, dedication, and patriotism.

As a Nation, we have a sacred duty to remember those who have died in service to our country, but we have an important responsibility to the living as well. America's Gold Star Mothers deserve our unfailing gratitude and profound respect, not only for their courage and compassion in the face of great personal sadness, but also for their constant love for our country and their fellow Americans. That is why the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895), has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 27, 1998, as Gold Star Mother's Day. I call on all government officials to display the United States flag on government buildings on this day. I also urge the American people to display the flag and to hold appropriate meetings in their homes, places of worship, or other suitable places, as a public expression of the sympathy and the respect that our Nation holds for its Gold Star Mothers.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7128 of September 29, 1998

National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today America is enjoying great prosperity, with the prospect of an even brighter future in the 21st century. Our economy is the strongest it has

been in a generation. We have created more than 16 million new jobs in the past 5 years, and we are witnessing the lowest inflation rate in three decades, the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, and the smallest welfare rolls in 29 years. But we cannot consider ourselves truly successful until all Americans, including the 30 million working-age adults with disabilities, have access to the tools and opportunities they need to achieve economic independence.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is making it possible for millions of Americans to participate more fully in our society. However, 8 years after the ADA's passage, the unemployment rate among people with disabilities is still far too high. Almost 75 percent of working-age Americans with severe disabilities remain unemployed. If America is to live up to its promise of equal opportunity, and if our economy is to continue to strengthen and expand, we must be able to draw on the untapped energy, talents, and creativity of this large and capable segment of our population.

Last March, I issued an Executive order to establish the National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities and begin to break down the remaining barriers for people with disabilities. I charged the Task Force with creating a coordinated and aggressive national strategy to make equality of opportunity, full participation, inclusion, and economic self-sufficiency a reality for all working-age Americans with disabilities. I have also directed the Attorney General, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to increase public awareness of rights and responsibilities under the ADA. It is particularly important to reach out in this effort to the small business community, because it employs most of our Nation's private work force.

Employment is the best path to economic security and to personal and professional fulfillment. I salute disability community leaders, business and labor leaders, government officials, community organizations, and concerned citizens who are working together to remove the remaining obstacles on that path so that all Americans with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute to our national life.

To recognize the great potential of people with disabilities and to encourage all Americans to work toward their full integration in the work force, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 155), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1998 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, educators, labor leaders, employers, and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that reaffirm our determination to fulfill both the letter and the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7129 of September 30, 1998**National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 1998**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Domestic violence is a leading cause of injury to American women, and teenage girls between the ages of 16 and 19 experience one of the highest rates of such violence. A woman is battered every 15 seconds in the United States, and 30 percent of female murder victims are killed by current or former partners. Equally disturbing is the impact of domestic violence on children. Witnessing such violence has a devastating emotional effect on children, and between 50 and 70 percent of men who abuse their female partners abuse their children as well. From inner cities to rural communities, domestic violence affects individuals of every age, culture, class, gender, race, and religion.

Combatting the violence that threatens many of our Nation's families is among my highest priorities as President. Through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), included in the historic Crime Bill I signed into law, we have more than tripled funding for programs that combat domestic violence and sexual abuse—investing over half a billion dollars since 1994. The Violence Against Women Office at the Department of Justice, which coordinates the Federal Government's implementation of the Act, is leading a comprehensive national effort to combine tough Federal laws with assistance to State and local programs designed to fight domestic violence and aid its victims. With VAWA grants, communities across our country have been able to hire more prosecutors and improve domestic violence training among police officers, prosecutors, and health and social service professionals.

My Administration has also worked to enact other important legislation that sends the clear message that family violence is a serious crime. The Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996 stiffens the penalties against perpetrators who pursue women across State lines to stalk, threaten, or abuse them; and an extension of the Brady Law prohibits anyone convicted of a domestic violence offense from owning a firearm. Since 1996, the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) we established has provided immediate crisis intervention, counseling, and referrals for those in need, responding to as many as 10,000 calls each month.

In observing the month of October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we also recognize the dedicated efforts of professionals and volunteers who take up this cause every day, offering protection, guidance, encouragement, and compassion to the survivors of family violence. We reaffirm our pledge to strengthen our collective national response to crimes of domestic violence. Most important, we strengthen our commitment to raise public awareness of the frequency of domestic violence, recognize the signs of such violence, and intervene before it escalates. If we are ever to erase the pain of these heinous crimes, we must help victims become survivors and, once and for all, end the scourge of violence in America's homes.